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	CTME-00	INL-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOFE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	EB-00	EUR-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00
	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7588
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 006297

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

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PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE OPPOSITION INCREASINGLY DIVIDED OVER
MASS ACTION; AMBASSADOR URGES RESTRAINT

REFTEL: HARARE 5983

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD FOR REASONS 1.5
(B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR MET OPPOSITION MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) SECRETARY-GENERAL WELSHMAN NCUBE NOVEMBER 7 TO PRESS HOME THE NEED FOR ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL PARTIES TO UNDERTAKE DIALOGUE AND DEFLATE TENSIONS. NCUBE ASSERTED THAT THERE ARE MANY PARTY STALWARTS WILLING TO TALK WITH THE MDC IF MUGABE WOULD LET THEM. HOWEVER, "MODERATES" IN THE MDC ARE LOSING MOMENTUM TO THE PARTY'S "RADICALS," WHO ARE INCREASING THE PRESSURE FOR MASS ACTION THAT WOULD FORCE MUGABE FROM POWER, ACCORDING TO NCUBE. THE MDC'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE HAS BEEN TRYING TO DELAY MASS ACTION FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, BUT THE RADICALS ARE MAKING IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO DO SO. NCUBE ESPOUSED THAT THE KEY QUESTION IS THE WILLINGNESS OF THE PARTY'S MAJORITY OF "FENCE-SITTERS" TO ENGAGE IN THE TYPE OF MASS ACTION THAT COULD RESULT IN VIOLENCE. GIVEN THE RAPID DECLINE OF THE ECONOMY, THE GROWING CLAMOR FOR MUGABE'S OUSTER, AND THE LOW PROBABILITY ZANU-PF WILL MAKE ANY CONCESSION ON ITS CURRENT COURSE, THE MDC LEADERSHIP MAY ULTIMATELY GIVE IN TO THE RADICALS' PRESSURE. THE AMBASSADOR MADE A STRONG APPEAL FOR RESTRAINT. END SUMMARY.

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2. (C) AMBASSADOR, DCM, AND POLOFF MET OPPOSITION MDC SECRETARY-GENERAL WELSHMAN NCUBE NOVEMBER 7 TO PRESS

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HOMING THE NEED FOR ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL PARTIES TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE AND DEFLATE TENSIONS. THE AMBASSADOR CONVEYED TO NCUBE THAT THE U.S. IS CONCERNED THAT THE MDC AND ZANU-PF REFUSE TO TALK TO EACH OTHER, AND THAT THE GENERAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IS NOT SUSTAINABLE. WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP, IF POSSIBLE, AND KNOWING WHO IN ZANU-PF TO APPROACH WOULD FACILITATE A HOPEFULLY CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE, THE AMBASSADOR STATED.

3. (C) NCUBE ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR DIALOGUE AND STATED THERE ARE PEOPLE MUGABE LISTENS TO THAT ARE WILLING TO TALK TO THE OPPOSITION. NCUBE CITED SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT EMMERSON MNANGAGWA, FORMER ZIMBABWE DEFENSE FORCES CHIEF AND POLITBURO MEMBER SOLOMON MUJURU, ZANU-PF SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION DIDYMUS MUTASA, AND FORMER MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL

SECURITY SYDNEY SEKERAMAYI AS THE CORE PEOPLE MUGABE STILL CONSULTS. THE PROBLEM LIES IN THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE NOT TAKEN THE NECESSARY STEPS TO INITIATE A DIALOGUE WITH THE MDC. (COMMENT: MDC SUPPORTER CLIVE PUZEY TOLD US THAT HIS PARTY HAD MADE SOME OVERTURES TO MUJURU TO SELL THE ZANU-PF LEADERSHIP ON AN AMNESTY DEAL. THE EFFORT WAS STILLBORN. END COMMENT.) MNANGAGWA, ZANU-PF CHAIRMAN JOHN NKOMO, AND VICE-PRESIDENT JOSEPH MSIKA HAVE ALL MADE STATEMENTS ON RESOLVING THE LAND PROBLEM IN A RATIONAL WAY. EVERYBODY IN THE PARTY, EXCEPT FOR THE VICE-PRESIDENTS, AGREE PRIVATELY THAT MUGABE MUST GO, AND NCUBE BELIEVES THAT

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MNANGAGWA CAN BE PERSUADED TO GET THE PARTY HIERARCHY TO BACK MUGABE'S EARLY DEPARTURE.

14. (C) INSIDE THE MDC, NCUBE STATED, THE PRESSURE TO RESORT TO MASS ACTION IS "PHENOMENAL." HE MENTIONED THE SIX MDC MPS WHO TOLD A CROWD OF CHITUNGWIZA RESIDENTS NOVEMBER 5 TO PREPARE FOR MASS ACTION IN DECEMBER TO FORCE MUGABE OUT. NCUBE EMPHASIZED THAT THE MPS WERE ACTING ON THEIR OWN AND DID NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY OF THE MDC NATIONAL EXECUTIVE TO MAKE THOSE STATEMENTS. THE EXECUTIVE IS STILL UNDECIDED ON THE TIMING AND FORM OF MASS ACTION--IT HAS BEEN TRYING TO PUT OFF A DECISION FOR TWO MONTHS NOW. NCUBE SAID THE PLAN OF ACTION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE EXECUTIVE IN TWO WEEKS ENTAILS A THREE-DAY GENERAL STRIKE FOLLOWED BY A MASS MARCH ON HARARE ON THE FOURTH DAY. WHEN ASKED WHAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD DO TO AVOID A POTENTIALLY VIOLENT MASS ACTION, NCUBE RESPONDED THAT THE MDC WOULD ACCEPT A CLEAR INDICATION FROM MUGABE OF HIS INTENTION NOT TO RUN FOR RE-ELECTION AND AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN EARLY ELECTION IN JANUARY 2002 (THE ELECTION IS DUE BY APRIL 2002). THIS WOULD DIFFUSE A LOT OF TENSION, NCUBE STATED, AND THE MDC COULD WAIT 15 MONTHS FOR AN ELECTION IF IT KNEW MUGABE WOULD NOT RUN, EVEN THOUGH THE MDC STANDS A BETTER CHANCE OF WINNING AGAINST MUGABE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NEITHER MUGABE NOR ZANU-PF LIKELY WOULD TAKE SUCH A STEP.

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15. (C) NCUBE WENT ON TO SAY THAT WITHOUT SOME ASSURANCES FROM ZANU-PF THAT MUGABE IS ON HIS WAY OUT, IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO CONTAIN THE RADICALS IN THE MDC. THE PARTY MODERATES, EVEN THOUGH THEY CONSTITUTE A MAJORITY OF MEMBERS, ARE FINDING IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO ANSWER THE DEMANDS OF THE RADICALS, AND ARE "LOSING MOMENTUM" TO THEM. WHEN MDC VICE-PRESIDENT GIBSON SIBANDA TRIED TO CONVINCE A CROWD OF SUPPORTERS IN BULAWAYO NOVEMBER 5 THAT THE MDC MUST WAIT FOR ELECTIONS, THE CROWD SHOUTED BACK "NO," AND DEMANDED TO KNOW THE DATE FOR MASS ACTION. SOME INDICATED TO

SIBANDA THAT THEY WOULD RATHER DIE THAN WAIT ANOTHER YEAR TO OUST MUGABE. NCUBE POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF HOMELESS IN THE CITIES JUST WAITING FOR THE CHANCE TO MARCH, AND THAT MILITANT MDC YOUTHS ARE SAYING THEY WILL FORCE RELUCTANT BYSTANDERS TO JOIN IN ONCE A DEMONSTRATION IS UNDER WAY. NCUBE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE "FENCE-SITTERS" IN THE MDC WILL DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF ANY MASS ACTION. THE RADICALS KEEP TELLING THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE THEY CAN DELIVER THE "FENCE-SITTERS" AND BRING OUT A MILLION PEOPLE IN HARARE AND A HALF MILLION IN BULAWAYO. NCUBE ADDED THAT SOME RADICALS DON'T CARE IF THOUSANDS DIE IF IT REMOVES MUGABE FROM POWER.

16. (C) NCUBE REITERATED THAT THE RADICALS IN THE PARTY DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE MAJORITY. THE RADICALS
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MOST FREQUENTLY DOMINATE RALLIES AND ARE TYPICALLY THE MOST OUTSPOKEN. THEY ARE THE ONES SPREADING THE WORD OF AN EARLY DECEMBER MASS ACTION IN AN ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, WHICH IS STILL DOMINATED BY MODERATES, INTO ANNOUNCING A MASS ACTION DATE, ACCORDING TO NCUBE. SOME RADICALS HAVE ACTED DISAPPOINTED ONCE MDC LEADERS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT EVEN IF MUGABE RESIGNS, THE MDC STILL MUST WIN AN ELECTION TO GET INTO POWER--IT WON'T SIMPLY TAKE OVER IF MUGABE STEPS ASIDE. THE AMBASSADOR URGED NCUBE TO INFORM MDC SUPPORTERS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND TO RESTRAIN THEM FROM ENGAGING IN MASS ACTION AND TRYING TO VIOLENTLY OVERTHROW THE PRESIDENT. IN ORDER FOR THE MDC TO KEEP ITS CREDIBILITY AND INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE OPPOSITION TO KEEP ITS STRATEGY OF STICKING TO THE HIGH ROAD IN THE FACE OF GOVERNMENT VIOLENCE AND REPRESSION.

17. (C) IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM DCM, NCUBE CLARIFIED REMARKS MADE BY TSVANGIRAI IN DUBLIN URGING WESTERN COUNTRIES TO CUT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH MUGABE'S GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH NCUBE WAS NOT PRESENT, HE SAID THAT TSVANGIRAI MAY HAVE MISSTATED HIS POINT--THAT THE MDC IS URGING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO SUSPEND AID AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SUPPORT IN ORDER TO ISOLATE THE GOVERNMENT. THE MDC DOES NOT WANT FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO CUT RELATIONS WITH ZIMBABWE. ZIMBABWE IS BIGGER THAN MUGABE OR ZANU-PF, NCUBE SAID, AND THE MDC DOES NOT WANT TO SEE FOREIGN INVESTORS PASSING UP ZIMBABWE, EVEN IF IT MEANS DEALING WITH MUGABE. THE MDC IS TALKING TO MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE NKOSANA MOYO TO ENSURE THAT TRADE WITH ZIMBABWE CONTINUES. THE
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MDC IS TRYING TO KEEP INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CHANNELS OPEN BECAUSE IT DOES NOT WANT TO INHERIT A COMPLETELY DESTROYED ECONOMY.

18. (C) COMMENT: DESPITE THE AMBASSADOR'S URGINGS OF RESTRAINT, NCUBE RETURNED AGAIN AND AGAIN TO THE THEME OF RADICALS IN THE MDC GAINING MORE INFLUENCE OVER MODERATES IN THE PARTY. THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN BORNE OUT IN THE MDC TABLING OF THE MUGABE IMPEACHMENT MOTION IN LATE OCTOBER. TWO OF THE PARTY'S "RADICALS," TRUDY STEVENSON AND EDDIE CROSS, HAD PUSHED HARD OVER TSVANGIRAI'S OBJECTIONS TO BEGIN THE IMPEACHMENT PROCESS

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(REFTEL). WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE MDC IS MERELY TRYING TO PROVIDE US AN EXCUSE FOR INSTIGATING MASS ACTION, IT ALSO HAS GOOD REASON TO ACT SOON RATHER THAN WAIT UNTIL 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS TO OUST MUGABE. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO DESTROY THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY SO THAT IF THE MDC DOES COME TO POWER, IT WILL BE SET UP FOR FAILURE, AND ZANU-PF CAN SWEEP BACK IN AT SOME POINT. IN ANY CASE, THE VOICES OF ACTION IN THE MDC DO APPEAR TO BE GETTING THE UPPER HAND, AND THE MDC LEADERSHIP MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FORESTALL MASS ACTION AND ASSOCIATED VIOLENCE MUCH LONGER, PARTICULARLY IF IT GETS NO HELP FROM THE GOVERNMENT IN THIS CONNECTION. END COMMENT.

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